Word counts and pacing cheat sheet

Typical lengths by genre, and a simple way to check pacing no matter the genre.

Genre	Typical length
Epic Fantasy	90,000–130,000 words (shorter is fine if the story is complete)
Progression Fantasy & LitRPG	80,000–150,000 words; often written in serial instalments
Urban Fantasy & Paranormal	70,000–90,000 words
Romance	55,000–90,000 words
Thriller & Suspense	70,000–95,000 words
Mystery & Cozy Mystery	60,000–85,000 words
Science Fiction	75,000–110,000 words
Young Adult	60,000–90,000 words
Middle Grade	30,000–55,000 words
Horror	70,000–95,000 words
Historical Fiction	80,000–110,000 words
Inspirational & Values-Driven Fiction	70,000–95,000 words

The three-act check

Act	Share of the book	What should happen
Act 1	about 25%	Establish the hero, the want and the first big problem; end with a choice that cannot be undone
Act 2	about 50%	Pressure rises; midpoint reversal; the hero loses something that matters
Act 3	about 25%	Crisis, climax and resolution; a rule shown earlier decides the ending

Your targets

Genre	
Target word count	
Words per chapter	
Number of chapters	
Act 1 ends at (word count)	
Midpoint at (word count)	

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